

It's the business

'The power to forget is a necessary condition of our existence' – Sholem Asch



A healthy bite

BRANSTON Pickle and Ambrosia custard maker **Premier Foods** yesterday swallowed meat-free producer **Cauldron Foods** as it tapped into a growing hunger for healthy meals.

Premier paid £27 million for Cauldron, which supplies supermarkets with vegetarian sausages, tofu and other foods from its Bristol base.

The £172m acquisition of the maker of Quorn in

June first took Premier into the healthy eating market. Its portfolio also includes Cadbury's Hot Chocolate and Sarson's vinegar.

Cauldron, which has 215 staff, has annual sales of £14.7m and pre-tax profits last year totalled £1.3m.

Chief executive Robert Schofield said: "Cauldron will further enhance our position in the high-growth healthy eating market."

FAIR SHARES

SPECULATION that another UK blue chip company was close to being taken over drove leading share prices higher yesterday. The FTSE 100 Index closed 27 points higher at 5344.3 as investors bet on the likes of insurer **Royal & SunAlliance** and oil and gas explorer **BG Group** being among the most likely bid targets.

BAA axe 700

AIRPORTS operator **BAA** is to shed 700 jobs or nearly one in five management and administration posts in a three-year cost-cutting drive.

The owner of seven UK airports, including Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted, said the cuts, from a worldwide workforce of 12,000, would save £45 million a year and lead to one-off costs of £90m.

Chief executive Mike Clasper said the group had performed well but needed streamlining to reduce bureaucracy while maintaining frontline staffing.

News of the cuts came as BAA announced increased traffic and a rise in underlying half-year profits from £348 million to £365m. Passenger numbers rose 2.5% to 82.3m in the six months to the end of September.

Matalan suffers

Sales plunge is 'scary'

MATALAN said yesterday sales had fallen off a cliff since the end of August.

The budget clothing chain

also warned it saw no sign of improvement in time for Christmas.

Chief executive John King blamed the unseasonably warm weather for a first half 6.3% like-for-like sales fall – accelerating to 10.6% in the past two months.

He said: "The whole market is down. Where T-shirts and shorts were not selling in the cold early

■ by BILL MARTIN

spring, it's the same now with knitwear and coats."

Analysts called the fall "pretty scary" and warned Matalan was losing customers to **Primark** and supermarket giants like **Tesco** and **Asda**.

They have been rapidly expanding their space for clothes.

Worse

Matalan's homework sales were doing even worse than its clothing, like the range modelled left.

Christmas gifts, cards and soft furnishings were selling particularly poorly, King said.

He added: "People are only buying things when they need them." But he insisted his stores close

to rivals had performed in line with the rest of the chain.

And he added: "Primark are piling up space as we did in the 1990s."

"But we found that as we got bigger we had to offer customers more choice."

Matalan shares, which reached 750p in the chain's glory days of rapid expansion in 2000, have fallen 30% this year.

Yesterday they rose 0.5p to 165.5p, even though analysts warned that a long-rumoured takeover bid was very unlikely.

First half profits were down 28% to £31 million as expected.

City experts warned that forecast £78m full-year profits could fall as low as £50m.

news@dailystar.co.uk

LSE bid given the OK

A £1.5 BILLION take-over of the **London Stock Exchange** by either of its two major rivals has been given the go-ahead.

But the Competition Commission placed obstacles in their path.

Euronext and **Deutsche Börse** must guarantee independence for the company that clears share trades in London, **LCH Clearnet**, before they can proceed.

It means Euronext, the only company considering a bid, must cut its stake in LCH Clearnet from 41.5% to 14.9%.

Deutsche Börse must undertake not to switch clearing to any clearing house it controls. It might bid if Euronext formalises its offer.

LSE shares rose 3p to 569.5p on the news.

HOT GOSSIP

GRESHAM Computing climbed 2.5p to 76p amid speculation it was close to agreeing deals for more major banks to use its **Nostro** clearing and settlement system for providing currency information. **HSBC** became the first financial giant to sign up nearly two months ago.

FTSE100 SHARE INDEX ▲ Up 27.00 points (0.51%) at 5344.30

Company	Price	Change	High	Low	▼	Company	Price	Change	High	Low	▼	Company	Price	Change	High	Low	▼	Company	Price	Change	High	Low	▼
3i Grp.	760,	+2,	788	626,	1470	Centrica	239.3d	+1,	264,	217,	1818	Land Secs.	1413	+24	1490	1197	1035	Ryf Dutch Shell 'A'	1740	-11	1875	1644	6690
A.B. Food.	788	-3,	863	699,	1082	Compass Group	190	-2,	264	175	1818	Legal&Gen.	109	+1*	119,	100,	1036	Ryf Dutch Shell 'B'	1838	-5	1959	1727	6691
Alimentation & Leic.	857,	+3,	916	722,	1233	Daily Mail	9	+9	764	617	1073	Lib-Int	943	+12,	1025	861	7640	SAB	1063	-3	1100	774	4718
Allianz & Partners	357,	+1,	432,	299,	1124	Diageo	833	-2	841	721	1029	Lyondell Basf Grp.	109	+1,	505	100,	1036	Sage Grp.	219,	+4	229	184,	6601
AMVESCAP	357,	+1,	432,	299,	1124	Ent.Mkt.	141	-1	141	101	1073	Marks & Sp.	413,	-4,	417,	319,	1039	Schroders	862,	+3,	947,	640,	1415
Anglo .	1679	+9	1704	1130	4949	Exel	789	+9,	872	610	4713	Morrison (Wm)	165xd	+1*	238	1162	7896	Sab Gru.	862	+3,	875	581	2917
Antofagasta	1474	+26	1580	1010	3438	Friends Prov.	177	+1*	189	136*	7733	National Grid	516	-5	527,	461	4443	Scot & Newcastle	466,	-1	489	405,	1421
Astrazeneca	2384	+26	2797	1977	1585	Gallaher Grp.	871	-6	871	699	1029	Next	170	+40	170,	1205	1035	Scot & Nth Energy	972	-8	1040	790	6027
Aviva .	606,	-7	636,	578,	1128	GUS	1476	-1	100	101	1029	Nimble Rock	209,	+3,	209,	104,	2100	Scot.PwC	557,	+4,	587	386,	6028
BAA Sys.	336.3d	+5,	344,	224,	1010	Old Mutual	838	-4,	989	821	1237	Old Mutual	131xd	-1,	144,	115,	1278	Shira Pharmaci	671	+4,	708	507,	5200
Barclays	563	+3	514	519,	1004	Hammerson	918,	+26,	933,	738	1030	PartyGaming	95,	+6,	176	71	840	Smith & Neghev	477xd	-1	558	451,	1434
BG Grp.	517	+21	548	502,	1123	Hanson	580	+7,	609	409,	1030	Regus	100	+10	100,	69	1036	Smith & Neghev	477xd	-1	558	451,	1434
BHP Bill.	549,	+10,	616	580,	1123	HBO5	840	+9,	812	726,	1030	Prudential	491,	+17,	542,	408,	1045	Smiths Group	910x	-2,	972,	550,	1437
BOC Grp.	1110	-3	1173	878	1008	Holiday Group	241	+2,	344	222	1030	Reckitt Benckis	1700	-17,	1834	1493	1046	Tate & Lyle	421,	+25	1247	924,	4887
Boots Group	610,	-5,	692	583,	1009	HSBC Hldgs	892,	-4	953,	825	1032	Reed Elsevier	525	+9	553,	461,	1396	Telstra	259xd	+1	259	147,	1437
BP .	629	+5	683,	509,	1011	Imp.Chem.	288,	+1*	307,	213,	1032	Rentokil Ifill	150,	-2,	173,	139,	7775	Unilever	575,	+2,	602	468,	5983
BP Amoco	734,	+3	741	422,	1094	Imp.Tobacco Grp.	1615	-5	1629	1271	1032	REXAM	480xd	-1	519	435,	1115	Vodafone Grp.	149,	+1,	155	133,	3577
Br Airlines	916	-3	921	422,	1036	ITV	106,	+2,	130	101	2145	Rio Tinto	2176	+22	2346	1430	6699	Whitbread	944	+4	1125,	828	1498
Br Land.	1231	-12	1243	826	1003	Power	29	-3	261	192	1029	Rolls-Royce	367c	+2,	388	236	6441	Wicks Hill	1164xd	+15	1240	871	3288
BSkyB	522,	+12	595	505	1128	Kellogg	690,	-5	723,	526	101	Royal Bank Scot.	1575	+11	1834	1522	1019	WPP Grp.	561xd	+15	625	534,	3287
BT	204,	-2,	205	185,	1015	Kingfisher	212.3d	+1*	316,	201	5908	RoyalSun All.	100xd	+4,	108,	73,	7482	Xstrata	1316	+23	1490	853	3421
Cable & Wire	516,	-16	164	104,	1015													Yell Grp.	448,	+5,	487,	366,	1026
Cadbury-Sch.	561,	+5,	594	446,	1016																		
Cairn Energy	1725	-2	2016	1042	3643																		
Capita Group	385,	-4,	394	345	5263																		
Carnival	2919	+50	3241	2637	2568																		

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Source: www.DigitalLook.com

CIGS BAN COSTS JDW

PUBS group **JD Wetherspoon** has hit out at the Government's planned smoking ban after unveiling a fall in sales in its non-smoking pubs.

Finance director Jim Clarke yesterday said proposals to ban smoking only in pubs serving food was "without logic".

He said the plan was confusing and would discriminate against staff in non-food pubs.

Clarke said like-for-like sales had fallen 7.3% in the 47 non-smoking pubs

in JDW's 650-strong estate. But he said the group was learning valuable lessons and would make all its pubs non-smoking before the 2007 ban.

The company also unveiled plans to open pubs at 9am to sell breakfasts and drinks to people coming off night shifts.

Its shares rose 4.5p to 300p.

Lambert & Butler maker **Imperial Tobacco** said overseas sales drove pre-tax profits up 11% to £1.12 billion for the year to September.

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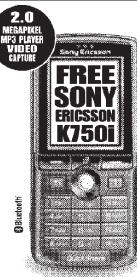
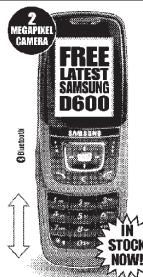
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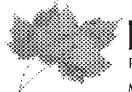
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LARK LOOKS ON SONG

■ by JIM AUSTIN of the RACING POST

CARROWKEAL LARK (10.00) kicked off his career in A5 grade, but this Son of Larkhill Jo quickly worked his way up the rankings and appears to have the Monkey Maiden Standard Final at his mercy over 415m at Harlow tonight.

His sectionals are that of an early speedball and he trounced his rivals when bolting up by over seven lengths in the heats, where 26.27 clocking underlined what a good performance that was.

It is a slight concern that he has failed to win when clad in trap five, but another slick exit can soon see him in control; and it will take an exceptional effort from one of the others to peg him back thereafter.

Of the eight opens on the card, three heats of the Monkey Stayers take place and **Brave**

Mentor (9.00) might have the layers running scared in the opening heat. Her form on British soil is nothing special, but she won well in an inter-track over 480m at Coventry, which suggests a spell in Ireland has worked wonders and she can make a winning debut for Hove handler Tony Gardiner.

Affinity (9.15) lacks a recent look round, but his style of running is perfect for this tricky circuit and a trap to line success is on the cards, while the consistent **Burnpark Top** (9.30) can give the locals something to cheer home by landing heat three.

The William Hill Lady Godiva kicks off at Coventry next Wednesday and armchair viewers should get a few pointers with a couple of above average trial stakes (Live on Channel 425).

Lethal Claudia (8.26) pays her way in top grade at Sheffield and was far from disgraced behind Shebbourne Nine in the Midland Oaks Final at Hall Green last month. She does lack a recent sighting, but Coventry is not the hardest of tracks to run first time up, and she clearly has the class to come through.

Droopys Lena is sure to have her supporters in the top division as Gary Baggs' bitch ran well on her last visit over c&d and should be approaching her best following seasonal rest. However, Scottish raider **Urban Classic** is progressing nicely and can make the most of a plum inside draw. The layers came out on top



PERFECT STYLE: Affinity in 9.15

with a few short priced favourites biting the dust in the opens at Swindon last week, but the punters can hit back tonight.

Rhincrow Simba (8.30) is the first to step up to the plate in a sprint over 285m. The June 2003 Son of Daves Mentor suffered a shock defeat when looking to chalk up a fifth timer recently, but his form over c&d is solid and he can pick up the pieces granted one of his usual slick exits.

Droopy Crespo (9.15) made a hash of the start when upstaged by Private Devon over the standard 480m trip last week, but revenge should be very sweet for the former.

Amazingly, he finds himself in another race full of trailers. However, where he was clad in the stripes then, he is now donning the red box and that should make all the difference as he shows a superior turn of foot down the farside.

HARLOW TONIGHT

7.30	(A8)	415m	9.00	(Open)	592m
2	1644 Edan Ranger (mf) (n)	27.34	1	3345 Aranck Con (mf)	38.64
2	1645 ELAY LAW (mf) (n)	27.35	2	3346 Aranck Con (mf)	38.81
3	2664 Pulties Panther (sa fw)	27.21	3	4654 Kissie Goss (ep md)	0.00
4	2122 Kellies Luck (ep) (n)	27.07	4	2112 Kellies Luck (sa fw)	0.00
5	6312 KNOCKARD BOY (ep) (n)	27.08	5	4343 Shoreditch Mal (ep) (n)	0.00
6	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	26.70	6	6552 Ballerina (sa fw)	0.00
7	1468 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	26.70	7	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	0.00
8	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	26.70	8	1523 GRAVE MENTOR (wd) (n)	0.00

Star betting: 9.4 Wellington Post, 5.2 Easy Law, 7.2 Harlow Luck, 9.2 Trap 1, 9.2 Future Ranger.

7.45	(A7)	415m	9.15	(Open)	592m
2	1642 Droops Janet (ep) (n)	27.02	1	3455 Badges Belle (ep) (n)	0.00
2	2634 Canine Tilly (sa fw)	26.76	2	4312 The Mint Film (ep) (n)	0.00
3	2634 Canine Tilly (sa fw)	26.76	3	1352 Rooster Flyer (ep) (n)	0.00
4	1522 Kenwyn Lauren (md) (n)	27.07	4	4343 Shoreditch Mal (ep) (n)	0.00
5	6312 KNOCKARD BOY (ep) (n)	27.08	5	6552 Ballerina (sa fw)	0.00
6	1468 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	26.70	6	1523 GRAVE MENTOR (wd) (n)	0.00
7	1468 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	26.70	7	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	0.00
8	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	26.70	8	1523 GRAVE MENTOR (wd) (n)	0.00

Star betting: 7.4 Affinity, 3.2 Brave Mentor, 3.2 Ellas Pride, 9.2 Trap 1, 9.2 Future Ranger.

8.00	(A6)	415m	9.16	(Open)	592m
2	2322 TOP MINXY (ep) (n)	26.57	1	3455 Badges Belle (ep) (n)	0.00
2	1248 Heart Print Vivid (ep) (n)	26.63	2	4312 The Mint Film (ep) (n)	0.00
3	1522 Endura (md) (n)	26.87	3	1352 Rooster Flyer (ep) (n)	0.00
4	2634 Canine Tilly (sa fw)	26.87	4	4343 Shoreditch Mal (ep) (n)	0.00
5	1453 Deorum (ep) (n)	26.53	5	6552 Ballerina (sa fw)	0.00
6	1468 Dream Run (ep) (n)	26.70	6	1523 GRAVE MENTOR (wd) (n)	0.00
7	1468 Dream Run (ep) (n)	26.70	7	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	0.00
8	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	26.70	8	1523 GRAVE MENTOR (wd) (n)	0.00

Star betting: 11.4 Rain Wellington Post, 5.2 Easy Law, 7.2 Harlow Luck, 9.2 Trap 1, 9.2 Future Ranger.

8.00	(A6)	415m	9.17	(Open)	592m
2	1248 Heart Print Vivid (ep) (n)	26.57	1	3455 Badges Belle (ep) (n)	0.00
2	1248 Heart Print Vivid (ep) (n)	26.63	2	4312 The Mint Film (ep) (n)	0.00
3	1522 Endura (md) (n)	26.87	3	1352 Rooster Flyer (ep) (n)	0.00
4	2634 Canine Tilly (sa fw)	26.87	4	4343 Shoreditch Mal (ep) (n)	0.00
5	1453 Deorum (ep) (n)	26.53	5	6552 Ballerina (sa fw)	0.00
6	1468 Dream Run (ep) (n)	26.70	6	1523 GRAVE MENTOR (wd) (n)	0.00
7	1468 Dream Run (ep) (n)	26.70	7	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	0.00
8	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	26.70	8	1523 GRAVE MENTOR (wd) (n)	0.00

Star betting: 11.4 Rain Wellington Post, 5.2 Easy Law, 7.2 Harlow Luck, 9.2 Trap 1, 9.2 Future Ranger.

8.00	(A6)	415m	9.18	(Open)	592m
2	1248 Heart Print Vivid (ep) (n)	26.57	1	3455 Badges Belle (ep) (n)	0.00
2	1248 Heart Print Vivid (ep) (n)	26.63	2	4312 The Mint Film (ep) (n)	0.00
3	1522 Endura (md) (n)	26.87	3	1352 Rooster Flyer (ep) (n)	0.00
4	2634 Canine Tilly (sa fw)	26.87	4	4343 Shoreditch Mal (ep) (n)	0.00
5	1453 Deorum (ep) (n)	26.53	5	6552 Ballerina (sa fw)	0.00
6	1468 Dream Run (ep) (n)	26.70	6	1523 GRAVE MENTOR (wd) (n)	0.00
7	1468 Dream Run (ep) (n)	26.70	7	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	0.00
8	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	26.70	8	1523 GRAVE MENTOR (wd) (n)	0.00

Star betting: 11.4 Rain Wellington Post, 5.2 Easy Law, 7.2 Harlow Luck, 9.2 Trap 1, 9.2 Future Ranger.

8.00	(A6)	415m	9.19	(Open)	592m
2	1248 Heart Print Vivid (ep) (n)	26.57	1	3455 Badges Belle (ep) (n)	0.00
2	1248 Heart Print Vivid (ep) (n)	26.63	2	4312 The Mint Film (ep) (n)	0.00
3	1522 Endura (md) (n)	26.87	3	1352 Rooster Flyer (ep) (n)	0.00
4	2634 Canine Tilly (sa fw)	26.87	4	4343 Shoreditch Mal (ep) (n)	0.00
5	1453 Deorum (ep) (n)	26.53	5	6552 Ballerina (sa fw)	0.00
6	1468 Dream Run (ep) (n)	26.70	6	1523 GRAVE MENTOR (wd) (n)	0.00
7	1468 Dream Run (ep) (n)	26.70	7	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	0.00
8	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	26.70	8	1523 GRAVE MENTOR (wd) (n)	0.00

Star betting: 11.4 Rain Wellington Post, 5.2 Easy Law, 7.2 Harlow Luck, 9.2 Trap 1, 9.2 Future Ranger.

8.00	(A6)	415m	9.20	(Open)	592m
2	1248 Heart Print Vivid (ep) (n)	26.57	1	3455 Badges Belle (ep) (n)	0.00
2	1248 Heart Print Vivid (ep) (n)	26.63	2	4312 The Mint Film (ep) (n)	0.00
3	1522 Endura (md) (n)	26.87	3	1352 Rooster Flyer (ep) (n)	0.00
4	2634 Canine Tilly (sa fw)	26.87	4	4343 Shoreditch Mal (ep) (n)	0.00
5	1453 Deorum (ep) (n)	26.53	5	6552 Ballerina (sa fw)	0.00
6	1468 Dream Run (ep) (n)	26.70	6	1523 GRAVE MENTOR (wd) (n)	0.00
7	1468 Dream Run (ep) (n)	26.70	7	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	0.00
8	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	26.70	8	1523 GRAVE MENTOR (wd) (n)	0.00

Star betting: 11.4 Rain Wellington Post, 5.2 Easy Law, 7.2 Harlow Luck, 9.2 Trap 1, 9.2 Future Ranger.

8.00	(A6)	415m	9.21	(Open)	592m
2	1248 Heart Print Vivid (ep) (n)	26.57	1	3455 Badges Belle (ep) (n)	0.00
2	1248 Heart Print Vivid (ep) (n)	26.63	2	4312 The Mint Film (ep) (n)	0.00
3	1522 Endura (md) (n)	26.87	3	1352 Rooster Flyer (ep) (n)	0.00
4	2634 Canine Tilly (sa fw)	26.87	4	4343 Shoreditch Mal (ep) (n)	0.00
5	1453 Deorum (ep) (n)	26.53	5	6552 Ballerina (sa fw)	0.00
6	1468 Dream Run (ep) (n)	26.70	6	1523 GRAVE MENTOR (wd) (n)	0.00
7	1468 Dream Run (ep) (n)	26.70	7	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	0.00
8	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	26.70	8	1523 GRAVE MENTOR (wd) (n)	0.00

Star betting: 11.4 Rain Wellington Post, 5.2 Easy Law, 7.2 Harlow Luck, 9.2 Trap 1, 9.2 Future Ranger.

8.00	(A6)	415m	9.22	(Open)	592m
2	1248 Heart Print Vivid (ep) (n)	26.57	1	3455 Badges Belle (ep) (n)	0.00
2	1248 Heart Print Vivid (ep) (n)	26.63	2	4312 The Mint Film (ep) (n)	0.00
3	1522 Endura (md) (n)	26.87	3	1352 Rooster Flyer (ep) (n)	0.00
4	2634 Canine Tilly (sa fw)	26.87	4	4343 Shoreditch Mal (ep) (n)	0.00
5	1453 Deorum (ep) (n)	26.53	5	6552 Ballerina (sa fw)	0.00
6	1468 Dream Run (ep) (n)	26.70	6	1523 GRAVE MENTOR (wd) (n)	0.00
7	1468 Dream Run (ep) (n)	26.70	7	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	0.00
8	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	26.70	8	1523 GRAVE MENTOR (wd) (n)	0.00

Star betting: 11.4 Rain Wellington Post, 5.2 Easy Law, 7.2 Harlow Luck, 9.2 Trap 1, 9.2 Future Ranger.

8.00	(A6)	415m	9.23	(Open)	592m
2	1248 Heart Print Vivid (ep) (n)	26.57	1	3455 Badges Belle (ep) (n)	0.00
2	1248 Heart Print Vivid (ep) (n)	26.63	2	4312 The Mint Film (ep) (n)	0.00
3	1522 Endura (md) (n)	26.87	3	1352 Rooster Flyer (ep) (n)	0.00
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5	1453 Deorum (ep) (n)	26.53	5	6552 Ballerina (sa fw)	0.00
6	1468 Dream Run (ep) (n)	26.70	6	1523 GRAVE MENTOR (wd) (n)	0.00
7	1468 Dream Run (ep) (n)	26.70	7	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	0.00
8	1469 Tilly's Tawny (ep) (n)	26.70	8	1523 GRAVE MENTOR (wd) (n)	0.00

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ANOTHER WINNER YESTERDAY. SO FOLLOW THE TEAM IN THE KNOW TODAY AND EVERY DAY ON

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simon delamere

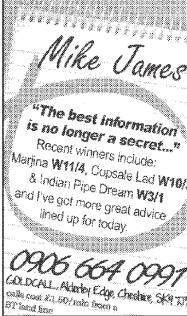
I've got today's card sorted!

My analysis has picked out a couple of beauties all set to run huge races today - call now and help me catch the bookies cool!

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MORDIN
One QUICK call is all it takes and you could be on my next big-priced winner and the stats indicate some excellent value today!
0906 664 0994
Calls cost £1.60 per min from a BT landline Golccall, Alderley Edge, Cheshire, SK9 7JS



SIMON MAPLETOFT
ZERO TOLERANCE W4/1
BURHAN W7/2

A winning end to last week and a great start to this...

I aim to keep the run going with more class advice today from another reliable stable source.

0906 664 0988

Calls cost £1.60 per min from a BT landline Golccall, Alderley Edge, Cheshire, SK9 7JS

THE SWEENEY WE'RE ON THE WAY!

For the last week I've been telling you about my superb National Hunt information - and if you've been calling, you're off to a flyer.

I've already taken a huge dent out of my Christmas 'five figure' profit target with Armaturk **W3/1**, Romany Dream **W5/2** & Midnight Gunner **W15/2** showing the true value of my unique advice.

**GIVE ME JUST ONE WEEK
AND YOU'LL SEE MY ABILITY!**
Chepstow and Kempton are in my sights.
Lump on - this is candy off a baby!

0906 664 09 92

Calls cost £1.50 per min from a BT landline Golccall, Alderley Edge, Cheshire, SK9 7JS

NOTTINGHAM will hold a precautionary inspection at 7am to determine whether today's meeting will go ahead.

Although officials are hopeful of holding the fixture, the going is currently soft, heavy in places and clerk of the course Nick Patton has his fingers crossed some of the forecast overnight rain bypasses the Colwick Park venue. "We are holding a pre-inspection purely because we would be fairly concerned if the forecast 10 to 12 millimetres of rain fell."

JOHN DUNLOP's Etikaar heads the market for Saturday's totesport November Handicap at Doncaster with the sponsors, who make the recent Newmarket winner a 6-1 chance to take the Flat turf season's last major event.

"We are holding a pre-inspection purely because we would be fairly concerned if the forecast 10 to 12 millimetres of rain fell."

JOHN DUNLOP's Etikaar heads the market for Saturday's totesport November Handicap at Doncaster with the sponsors, who make the recent Newmarket winner a 6-1 chance to take the Flat turf season's last major event.

NEW QUARTERS
HORSES having their first runs for new trainers:
CHEPSTOW: (1) Neptune Collonges (10) Negus Colloge (11) P. Nichols (21) Future Legend (P. Bay (Fr)) J. Old (J. G. O'Shea), 42, Jayne (Ireland) (2) Mr Murphy (T. Quinn) (3) Murphy (D. Sweney) (4) Slattery (P. Mathers) (5) E. Hayes (J. Old) (6) C. Naylor (P. Mathers) (7) McCarthy (M. Batchelor) (34) Paul Eddery (33) S. Drowne 32.

STARFORM: PEARLY POLL D: Makai

12.25 MAIDEN STAKES (DIV 1) (5) 2YO 6f (10 runners) £3,264

1 (6) 00 JOKING JOHN (27) C. Hartnett 9.0... D. McKeown 10.0... T. Murphy 11.0... D. Mullane 12.0... T. Darley 13.0... S. Sanders 14.0... K. Darley 15.0... S. Sanders 16.0... K. Darley 17.0... S. Sanders 18.0... K. Darley 19.0... S. Sanders 20.0... K. Darley 21.0... S. Sanders 22.0... K. Darley 23.0... S. Sanders 24.0... K. Darley 25.0... S. Sanders 26.0... K. Darley 27.0... S. Sanders 28.0... K. Darley 29.0... S. Sanders 30.0... K. Darley 31.0... S. Sanders 32.0... K. Darley 33.0... S. Sanders 34.0... K. Darley 35.0... S. Sanders 36.0... K. Darley 37.0... S. Sanders 38.0... K. Darley 39.0... S. Sanders 40.0... K. Darley 41.0... S. Sanders 42.0... K. Darley 43.0... S. Sanders 44.0... K. Darley 45.0... S. Sanders 46.0... K. Darley 47.0... S. Sanders 48.0... K. Darley 49.0... S. Sanders 50.0... K. Darley 51.0... S. Sanders 52.0... K. Darley 53.0... S. Sanders 54.0... K. Darley 55.0... S. Sanders 56.0... K. Darley 57.0... S. Sanders 58.0... K. Darley 59.0... S. Sanders 60.0... K. 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Best Mate dies of heart attack

THE KING is dead - long live the King!

Those famous words never conveyed more meaning than at Exeter yesterday when Best Mate ran his final race - and a possible new flag bearer stormed onto the scene.

The triple Gold Cup winner, who even carried off the 'best turned out' prize, collapsed and died before the last fence of the William Hill Haldon Gold Cup - but his name will remain embossed in the Racing Hall Of Fame.

Flocked

More than 6,000 National Hunt enthusiasts had flocked to the course to see the return of a legend - hoping against hope that a broken blood vessel earlier in the year hadn't halted his brilliant career.

The ten-year-old gelding - described by his



SAD TIMES: Best Mate collapses

by TONY LEWIS

adoring trainer Henrietta Knight as "The most beautiful horse ever created" - looked in terrific condition and jumped with real zest behind pacemaker Ashley Brook over the first few fences before losing his pitch five from home.

His new jockey Paul Carberry nursed him over the next couple of fences before pulling him up before the third last.

It was as he approached the final fence that he gurgled, staggered and fell down - probably the result of a heart attack. And the first person to be at his side was Henrietta Knight herself.

Ironically, the warm sunshine that had greeted the crowds, suddenly disappeared behind a big, chilly cloud.

The race itself went to Monkerhostin and, thankfully, the winner's confections were allowed to celebrate before the track's assistant manager Vicki Robinson confirmed the sad news and announced it to the crowd.

Yet as numbing as that was, all those people who came to see Best Mate were able to express their feelings to Knight and her husband Terry Biddlecombe half an hour later.

Racing Demon, a five-year-old novice chaser for whom the pair hold very high hopes, won his first chase over the same track and trip that had seen Best Mate win his first effort over fences in October 2000. The reception, as they led Racing Demon back into the winner's

enclosure, was amazing. First came the general clapping all the way up to the hallored spot. Then a truly massive cheer.

"There's nothing you can say; it's one of those things," said Hen, putting on her bravest face.

"It looks like a heart attack. I have ridden a horse that died of a heart attack. Their legs go and they wobble and go down. That's it."

"I was the first person there and I knew immediately he was dead. You don't really think about it at the time. He died doing what he loved doing - racing. He was such a great horse, at least he didn't do anything terrible and fall or break a leg."

"I didn't have any problems with him at all this autumn. The whole country will miss him and, at least, he's never been beaten in the Gold Cup.

Harm

"It was a bit like Persian Punch at Ascot. Even this morning he was getting good luck cards in the post. He never did anyone any harm and was a joy to work with."

"When I went to greet Racing Demon, all the people round the fence were clapping. It was so moving. We have so many supporters here."

Biddlecombe, who forecast that his wife would undoubtedly shed a few tears later on, said: "He would have felt no pain. It's the sad side of racing, but one has to go forward and find another to replace him and you might just have seen him."

"We have seen it happen before and it will happen again. We will get over it."



HAPPIER TIMES: Best Mate (top left) wins 2002 Gold Cup and again 2003 (top right) while owner Jim Lewis, trainer and jockey Jim Culloty celebrate the hat-trick in 2004

HUNTINGDON ON 09055 141 602 (612)

TOP JOCKEYS (with mounts) R Thornton 22 winners, (13% strike rate), £26.87, J M Maguire 11, (19%), +£27.26, N Fehily 11, (15%), +£97.22, B Fenton 9, (15%), -£7.90, J McNamea 8, (9%), -£26.00, L Aspell 8, (7%), -£69.51.

1.10 RACING UK HANDICAP HURDLE Class E conditions (8 flights/2m 1/2f (14 runners) £3,314 1 -15422 RESPECTED STAR (65)(CD,F,P) Mrs L Wadham 8 11 7

2 13P IRISH WOLF (25)(D,F,P) P Bowen 5 11 12 T Greenway 41 W Jones 40 *+91.51

3 542205 ARTANE BOYS (13)(D,G,P) Jonjo O'Neill 8 11 11 W Kennedy 62

4 P/215-3 IBERUS (31)(D,S,P) S Golings 7 11 9

5 2005-HONEST ENDEAVOUR (13)(D,F,G,P) J Jefferson 6 11 9

P Morigan 57

6 0450P MOON EMPEROR (F21)(D,S) J Jenkins 6 11 9 R Lucy-Barker 59

7 1234212 FESTIVE CHIMES (BF1)(B,F,G,P) N H King 6 11 7 O Nelmes 59

8 3143-P TIGANNE (19)(D,G,P) G L Moore 6 11 11 E Dehdash 67

9 54500-A ARDASHIR (17)(D,G,P) N H King 6 11 7 J Kinane 67

10 405-405 MANOLIO (13)(D,G,P) J Williams 6 11 7 J O'Neill 62

11 0065-5 PARK CITY (21)(D,S,P) J Joseph 6 10 8 L Heard 57

12 223634 D'S DILEMMA (C) C Beatty 7 10 6 T Messenger 51

13 P-6001 UNCLE JOHN (19)(G,I,P) Williams 4 10 11 D Boland 57

14 065-T THE FOOTBALLRUSSELL (14)(B) P R Johnson 4 10 8

LONG HANDICAP: The Footbalrusell. 0 P Kavanagh(19)

Star Betting:- 11-2 Festive Chimes, 6 Tiganne, 13-2 Artane Boys, 7 Iberus,

5 Respected Star, 10 Honest Endeavour, 12 others.

2004: No corresponding race.

STARFORM: ARTANE BOYS Danger: Di's Dilemma

1.45 DERK SLY NOVICES' HANDICAP CHASE Class D (19 fences) 3m (10 runners) £5,478

1 12525 FULLARD (29)(B,C,D,G,P) W Marston 69

2 65303-3 THE HOLY BEE (31)(D,G,P) Mrs S Sly 6 11 6

3 P/215-3 SPINOSKI (15)(D,G,P) A Spinowski 6 11 7

4 54500-A ARDASHIR (17)(D,G,P) N H King 6 11 7

5 SP-306 PEDINA (16)(S) C Mann 7 11 4

6 SP1405 IT'S DEFINITE (13)(D,F,G,P) A Doblin +100

7 223634 DANTE'S BACK (11)(D,B,P) N Watson-Davies 7 11 3

8 405-405 DANCING IN THE STREETS (19)(D,G,P) J Evans 7 10 9

9 60045-P ROMAN COURT (199)(S) A Roper 6 10 8 J O'Neill 62

10 00402-M MEMORIES OF GOLD (17) J Dahgar 5 10 0 P J Brennan 57

LONG HANDICAP: Memories of Gold 9-12.

Star Betting:- 5-2 Stack the Pack, 5 Fullards, The Holy Bee,

11-2 It's Definite, 8 Roman Court, 10 Pedina, 12 Dante's Back, 14 others.

2004: Just Jolly, 9-10-5, (G Horner(10), 6-1 J Cornwall, 5 ran.

STARFORM: STACK THE PACK Danger: Pedina

ABC GUIDE TO ALL THREE MEETINGS

C-Chepton H-Huntingdon N-Notttingham

Adalia...C 1.35 Captain Smoothy...H 3.30 Forces Sweetheart...H 3.25

African Sabra...N 3.45 Carticol...H 2.35 Fullards...H 1.45

Always Waining...C 3.20 Calivo Cavallino...H 1.25 Futuo...H 3.45

Amber Glory...N 1.25 Chrysanthemum...N 3.10 Future Legend...C 2.10

Amberine...C 2.45 Coffin Dodger...H 2.35 Gattuso...H 1.25

A Pound Down...C 1.00 Dancinginthestreets...C 3.20 Grand Jour...H 1.25

Archduke Ferdinand...J 3.30 Dangerousdangamuru...C 4.25 Devilish Hero...H 1.25

Argent Ou...C 2.10 Daring Affair...N 3.45 Great Memories...H 2.55

Artane Boys...H 1.10 Diana's Choice...N 1.25 Green Prospect...A 4.05

Ashtown...C 2.45 Dixieland...H 2.35 Hellefine...H 1.25

Asido...C 3.55 Dixieland...H 4.05 Hells...H 1.25

At Loggersheads...C 3.55 D's Dilemma...H 1.10 Heir To Be...H 4.05

Ballet Slippers...N 12.25 Dolly Brown...H 12.25 Honest Endeavour...H 1.10

Ballin...C 2.00 Don...H 1.25 Honey...H 1.25

Barton Legend...C 1.00 Dream Falcon...C 3.20 Hurley...H 4.15

Battalion...N 2.00 Dream Merchant...H 3.30 Iberus...H 1.10

Bellini Star...C 2.00 Dryline...C 3.20 Idiot Journey...H 1.25

Billy...C 0.55 Javelin...H 1.25 Jester...H 1.25

Bill's Nap...C 1.00 East Lawyer...C 4.25 Irish Grouse...H 2.55

Bin Rahy...N 2.00 Economic...N 2.35 Irish...H 1.10

Black Swan...H 2.55 Essex...H 1.10 Jester...H 1.25

Brigadier...H 1.25 Fullard...H 1.25 Myths...H 1.25

Burnt Moonshine...H 4.05 Euro Bleu...C 2.45 His Definition...H 1.25

Busy Man...C 3.30 Festive Chimes...H 1.10 Jayjay...C 4.25

By Degen...C 2.00 Jester...H 1.25 John...H 1.25

Cannibal Gal...N 4.15 Fine Tuned...H 3.30 John Claude...H 1.25

Callanish...C 2.35 Fluerette...C 2.10 Joking John...H 12.25

Chesterfield...C 2.00 Jester...H 1.25 John...H 1.25

Cheshire...C 2.00 Jester

ASHES ACES FLOP AGAIN

ENGLAND'S Ashes heroes suffered another batting nightmare here yesterday – but were then praised by assistant coach Matthew Maynard.

Michael Vaughan's men stare defeat in the face after crashing to 39-6 against the Pakistan Cricket Board Patron's XI, leaving them with a precarious lead of 84.

And that followed an equally disastrous 60-6 in the first innings of their three-day tour opener.

But Maynard ruled out any idea of complacency from a team heralded for their victory over Australia less than two months ago.

Maynard said: "To lose the wickets has been a disappointment. But the guys look

■ from RODNEY WHITE in Rawalpindi

in top nick in the nets and the practice wickets are totally different to the centre wicket we have here.

"That will be totally different to the Test wicket we will have in two weeks' time, so I wouldn't read too much into it."

Muggy

England's own Test back-up bowlers fared well on a surface allowing occasional exaggerated seam movement as well as swing in the muggy air.

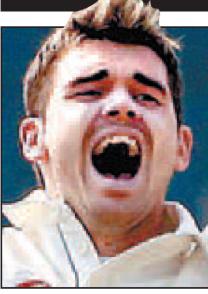
James Anderson and off-spinner Shaun Udal returned to the fold with three wickets each and debutant Liam Plunkett did the same as the Board XI were out for 211.

Yasir Arafat (2-1) and Mohammad Ihsan (3-22) did the damage second time round on a pitch Maynard conceded should have suited England's batsmen.

He said: "It is pretty much English conditions, but we haven't adapted that well."

Andrew Strauss (6), Vaughan (0), Kevin Pietersen (10) and Geraint Jones (0) went cheaply as England crashed in 14 overs.

ENGLAND 256-9dec (Frescotrick 124no, Prior 3-22; PATRONS XI 211 (Udal 3-36, Plunkett 3-41, Anderson 3-50).



ANDERSON: Three wickets

Prince to rule for Roos

AUSTRALIA have put their faith in Scott Prince as the man to pick up the torch left by the great Andrew Johns, writes MARTIN RICHARDS.

The Wests Tigers skipper caps a fairytale season with his debut after getting the nod over Trent Barrett and Craig Gower for the scrum-half spot against Great Britain at Wigan on Saturday. Queenslander Prince, who led unfa-

cied Wests to their first NRL title this season, takes over from injured Johns, whose Test reign appears to be over.

Prince, 25, admitted: "It's an honour and a privilege to play for Australia and to get the nod over two more experienced candidates. Now I have to perform."

AUSTRALIA (Minichiello; King, Gasnier, Cooper, Tide; Lockyer (capt); Prince; Price, Budrus, Civoniceva, O'Donnell, Fitzgibbon, B. Kennedy, Subs from Barrett, Ryles, O'Meley, Mason, Hindmarsh.

YESTERDAY'S WINNERS AND PRICES

MONKERHOSTIN has been slashed to 5-2 clear favourite from 10-1 by Coral for the Paddy Power Gold Cup after his impressive win at Exeter yesterday.

RACING DEMON has been promoted to 7-1 clear favourite from 12-1 for the Royal & Sunalliance Chase and to 8-1 from 14-1 for the Arkle after his win at Exeter. Chilling Place is 10-1 from 20-1 for the Arkle after his gallant second.

Leading novice hurdler Roman Ark is likely to make his chasing debut at Carlisle on Monday. Malcolm Jefferson's grey rattled off a three-timer last winter, including one of the best performances by a novice when thrashing Baby Run and Turpin Green in a Grade Two event at Haydock.

CATTERICK

1.00 (7f): 1, GLENBUCK (J Fanning 5-1); 2, Laphonic (Saleem Golam 9-2); 3, Graze On (E Alford 10-1); 4, Dancer (L. Moore 9-1); 11, 11 ran. A Barley, Tarporley.

Tote: £5.90; pl: £1.90, £2.00, £4.60, exacta: £20.20, cst: £26.40.

1.30 (7f): 1, ORCHARD SUPREME (R. Moore 6-1); 2, Little London (Dean McKeown 14-1); 3, King's Revenge (Mike Allan 15-8); Violent Velocity 6-4 fav, 6l, 1/2, 11 ran. R Hannon, Marlborough.

Tote: £8.40; pl: £2.10, £3.00, £1.50, cst: £27.00, cst: £30.00.

2.00 (6f): 1, NAMID BEPROFF (S. W Kelly 6-1); 2, Hits Only Jude (Dean McKeown 3-1); 3, Squadron Leader (R. Moore 11-1). High Curragh 5-2 fav, NK, 3/2, 10 ran. P Colk, Whatcombe.

Tote: £6.60; pl: £2.30, £3.00, £1.40, exacta: £20.60, cst: £24.04, triexact: £197.97.

2.30 (1m 4f): 1, GIFTED MUSICAL (E. Ahern 13-2); 2, Desert Sun (R. Moore 3-1 jt fav); 3, Xacobus (R. Moore 7-2). Trew Style 3-1 fav, 5l, 5, 11 ran. J Dunlop, Arundel.

Tote: £1.00; pl: £2.30, £1.50, £1.60, exacta: £36.40, cst: £23.22.

3.00 (7f): 1, WYATT EARL (E. Ahern 20-1); 2, Trifecta (E. Ahern 8-1); 3, Imperialistic (D. P. McDonagh 12-1); 4, Zhitomir (P. Makin 8-1). Morse 11-2 fav, 2l, 1/4, 1/4, 18 ran. R Fahey, Malton.

Tote: £6.30; pl: £7.40, £2.50, £4.00, £2.00, cst: £22.00, cst: £30.20, cst: £164.85, triexact: £2.045.72.

3.30 (5f): 1, DIZZY IN THE HEAD (L. Enstone 6-1 jt fav); 2, Mynd (Hayley Turner 6-1 jt fav); 3, Angelothorinth (A. Munro 9-1), 3/2, 3/2, 17 ran. I Semple, Trew.

Tote: £7.70; pl: £2.80, £2.30, £4.70, exacta: £30.70, cst: £55.93.

4.00 (1m 6f): 1, HERNANDO'S BOY (R. Moore 9-1); 2, Grey.

Tote: £8.40; pl: £2.40, £3.10, £3.70, exacta: £47.40, cst: £58.12, triexact: £727.87.

4.10 (3m): 1, TOULOUSE-LAUTREC (P. Moore 10-1 fav); 2, Knight of Silver (R. Moore 50-1); 3, Rosetown (W. McCarthy 7-1). 41, Hd, 9 ran. T George, Slad.

Tote: £1.80; pl: £1.10, £5.20, £1.70, exacta: £33.00, cst: £42.07, triexact: £235.77.

QUADPOT: £8.40
PLACEPOT: £13.40
JACKPOT: £22.15, 60.

WORCESTER

1.50 (2m): 1, NOVACILLA (A. Thornton 13-8 fav); 2, Very Special One (J. P. McNamara 12-1); 3, Labellohu (J. Tizzard 9-2), 2/2, 21, 61, 13 ran. R Alner, Blandford.

Tote: £2.10; pl: £1.10, £2.30, £2.20, exacta: £22.50, cst: £22.53, 2/2, 21, 61, 13 ran. T George, Slad.

Tote: £1.80; pl: £1.10, £5.20, £1.70, exacta: £33.00, cst: £42.07, triexact: £235.77.

QUADPOT: £8.40
PLACEPOT: £13.40
JACKPOT: £22.15, 60.

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SERIOUSLY
football

Gunners aiming for a knockout

Wenger:
Mour just
so stupid

From Back Page

But I do not know what that will be yet. I have not said anything malicious about Chelsea, just my honest opinion.

"I would expect others to do the same about Arsenal, if they were asked.

"I do not care what people say but I will always say what I think. If you give success to stupid people it makes them more stupid sometimes, not more intelligent.

"When you receive personal attacks that are nothing to do with the game, you have to say it is disrespectful.

"I will not accept that lack of respect."

Sickness

Wenger's strong words came after Mourinho taunted his rival in the wake of Chelsea's 4-2 win over Blackburn.

The Arsenal boss had previously suggested the Premiership champions could be vulnerable after drawing with Everton and losing on penalties to Charlton in the Carling Cup.

Mourinho's prickly response was: "I think Wenger is one of those – what do you call it in English – voyeurs.

"He is someone who likes to watch other people. He is always speaking about other families. It is a sickness. Being a voyeur is a sickness."



THUMBS UP: Thierry Henry looks fit and sharp in training yesterday while Arsene Wenger (inset) is deep in thought

Pics: LAWRENCE LUSTIG

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ARSENAL	3	3	0	0	6	2	9
Ajax	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
FC Thun	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
Sparta Prague	3	0	1	2	1	4	1

Remaining fixtures – Tonight: Arsenal v Sparta Prague, FC Thun v Ajax, Nov 22: Ajax v Sparta Prague, FC Thun v Arsenal. Dec 7: Arsenal v Ajax, Sparta Prague v FC Thun.

I WON'T LOSE ANY SLEEP OVER JIBE

ARSENE WENGER has enjoyed his jousting with Sir Alex Ferguson but when it comes to Jose Mourinho it's personal.

And the Chelsea boss has made sure of that.

Fergie and Wenger have always loved the mind games, and employed them to great effect.

But brash Mourinho does not care about reputations and has taken the battles to an extra level by calling Wenger "a sick voyeur" in an attempt to wind him up.

This is nothing new. In his short time in England the Portuguese boss has upset UEFA, the FA, the Premier League, Johan Cruyff, Frank Rijkaard, Mark Hughes,

by DANNY FULLBROOK

Liverpool fans and particularly

being disrespectful and insisting he is not obsessed with Chelsea, he still found the clarity of mind to have another well-timed dig when talking about the title race.

He said: "There is a long way to go, especially if people get nervous."

Of course, claiming back-to-back titles is something Wenger has not been able to do.

The fact Chelsea look certain to be another irritation to the normally unflappable Wenger.

Chelsea smashed all sorts of records on the way to their first League Championship in 50 years last season.

But Wenger insisted last night: "I am not obsessed with Chelsea. I am at a club that I am happy

with. I do not understand why he has said what he has but I will not be asking for an apology because there is nothing to say. There is no need to clear the air."

"What he has said will not stop me sleeping at night. I have a game to be concerned about.

"I can take criticism about my team but take exception when it becomes personal.

Respect

"I am just getting on with my job and continue saying what I want to say. That will be about football and not a personal attack.

"Our Champions League destiny is much more important. We have a chance of finishing the job against Prague and qualifying. But I will not accept the lack of respect I have been shown. Frankly I am not interested in Chelsea. I never worry about them.

"I know we are equipped to win the Champions League, just like 10 or 11 other teams. *"We will be giving it our best shot.*

Thierry Henry is set to start against Sparta but Freddie Ljungberg is out. ARSENAL (probs): Lehmann, Larsen, Toure, Campbell, Clichy, Reyes, Fabregas, Gilberto, Pires, Henry, Bergkamp.

TV: Sky Sports Xtra 7.45 (digital viewers choose from eight matches).

GREG RUEDSKI

failed in his bid to topple Tim Henman as British No.1 when he crashed 6-2 6-2 to Russia's Nikolay Davydenko in the second round of the Paris Masters.

"There wasn't much happening for me today," said Ruedski. "Whichever option I chose was the wrong one."

Hans up for Panthers

SPEEDWAY
by PETER OAKES

PETERBOROUGH are closing in on the first big signing of the winter – and he's on their own doorstep.

They are set to snap up Danish star Hans Andersen, who lives on a posh estate close to the East of England Showground and can even see the track from his bedroom window!

Andersen, 25 tomorrow, will decide this morning



whether to rejoin his old club. But the odds are he will agree to end a two-season spell with Elite League rivals Ipswich to return to the Panthers.

The ex-Scandinavian Grand Prix champion vowed never to ride for

Peterborough again after an acrimonious split at the end of 2003.

But a change of ownership – with ex-promoter Mick Horton selling out to his brother Colin in the summer – will make it easier for Andersen to have a change of heart.

Answer

Andersen flew back home to Denmark yesterday and has promised to give his final answer to Peterborough's lucrative offer first thing today

after discussing it with his family.

Meanwhile, Elite League Oxford seem certain to be in new hands by the end of the month.

Owner Steve Purchase has revealed he is in talks with a prospective buyer after the previous leaseholder, Nigel Wagstaff, quit last week.

Purchase said: "Our discussions are at an advanced stage and I am hopeful that a deal can be concluded shortly."

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THROUGH THE VICTOR CHANDLER GROUP

NEW DAILY GAMING COLUMN

TUTORIAL QUESTIONS

Question A: During tournament play you find yourself heads up. Your stack is four times more valuable than the big blind who limps in. Your hole cards are the Ace of Spades and the Ace of Clubs. Should you check? Pile in with a large raise? Or make a raise that your opponent might be tempted to call?

Question B: You have King of Spades and King of Diamonds as hole cards on the button. Four players ahead of you limp in and you raise three times the big blind. The flop is Jack of Hearts, Five of Clubs and Ace of Clubs. You're faced with two calls and a raise of six times the big blind. What action do you take? Do you call? Do you re-raise? Do you go all-in? Or fold?

Question C: You're in a \$5-\$10 game where everyone at the table is deep stacked. You're dealt Five of Hearts and Five of Diamonds in a late position and follow a small raise with your call after two other calls have been made. The flop produces Five of Spades, Seven of Hearts, Ten of Clubs. The raiser bets, another player calls and you decide to call. Another Ten shows up at the turn and everyone repeats their previous action. The river delivers a Queen. Everyone checks except the raiser who makes a big bet. All those left in the game have plenty of funds. Do you re-raise? Call? Fold? Or go all-in?

TUTORIAL ANSWERS

Answer A: The strategy is clearly to keep your opponent in the game while realising that pocket rockets are a fabulous hand under any circumstances. You don't want to edge him out of the game until you have an idea of what he's holding and you certainly don't want him to see the flop for free while you're holding pocket dynamite. The answer is you make a raise that's within his ability to call.

Answer B: There's an excellent chance one of your opposing players is holding an Ace. There's even a likelihood his kicker is a Jack or a Five. Either way with an Ace on the board the chance of a pair of bullets is too great for your Kings. It never feels good to fold a high pair but it's the right play when you see that Ace in the community cards.

Answer C: Your hand is good but not invincible by any means.

It's easily possible the raiser made Queen trips at the river following up on a pair of Queens in the hole. You should call. If he re-raises you should bow out with your stack still intact and pray it's not a mad bluff.

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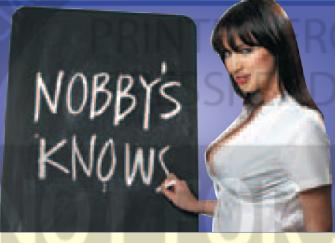


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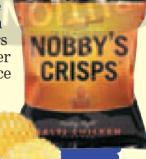
Crispy car prize for fact fanatics

SNACK on fantastic facts with sexy Sophie as we continue to bring you the world's best trivia in our new column Nobby's Knows.

While Nobby's crisps fill you up a treat, Nobby's Knows will leave you with total trivia satisfaction.

For Star readers have joined our fact frenzy by sending in great trivia and tasty tips – to get automatically in an awesome prize draw for a Honda Civic Type R.

Here we give you the chance to be the king of pub knowledge with fab sporting facts sent in by readers and solve our Number Cruncher question below for another chance to win the car.



HE'S GOT BALLS

Obsessive collector Ted Hoz of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, has a collection of 69,384 golf balls. We don't reckon his neighbours are 'green' with envy.

FANCY THAT

The word 'fan' doesn't come from the word 'fanatic'. In fact it comes from the posh 'fancy men' who used to watch bare-knuckle fighting in the 19th century.

RED CARD RECORD

The beautiful game turned into the ugliest during a match between Chile and Uruguay in June 1975 when a nutty 19 players picked up a red card.

TURFED OUT

It's a tough at the top as Bill Lampton of Scunthorpe found out – he holds the record for the shortest ever reign as a football club boss lasting a miserable three days.

GETTING SHIRTY

Goalies didn't have to wear different coloured shirts from their team-mates until 1913 – after referees complained that they needed to clearly know which player could handle the ball. At first green was the most popular because few teams wore the colour as their first strip.

Keep sending in your facts and trivia for a chance to get straight into the draw for this week's awesome Honda Type R, simply text TRIVIA to 88533 or email us – competition@dailystar.co.uk with NEWS FOR NOBBY'S as the subject title. You can also enter by following Nobby's link on www.dailysnack.com and watch out for Nobby's Knows every day this week.

THE BIG NUMBER CRUNCHER

Collect a single digit figure by choosing the correct number from our Number Cruncher, every day in the Daily Star. The whole week's questions will be repeated in Friday's column where there will be the chance to send in the correct five digit code to enter our prize draw – with the chance to win a Honda Civic Type R.

THE QUESTION

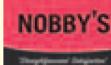
What is the number of shirt that David Beckham wears when he plays for England?

A. 1 B. 3 C. 7



For more information on Nobby's Crisps visit www.dailysnack.co.uk

Premium rate phone line. Texts should be no longer than 160 characters. Texts cost £1.50 plus your usual operator rate. Winners will be selected from all entries received by midnight 06/11/05. Normal Daily Star rules apply.



SERIOUSLY
football

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: We feel your

WOOLY'S VERDICT

Roy's rant has to be punished

IT is difficult to see how Roy Keane can play for Manchester United again.

Whatever the reaction by the players tonight in the Champions League against Lille, Keane has distanced himself from a new team trying to prove there isn't a crisis at Old Trafford.

Not for the first time in his career, the captain has gone over the top. This time, on his own team-mates.

Brave

What Keane should have done is march into the training ground on Monday morning and pinned a few of them up against a wall, not vent his disgust inside a TV studio.

It is claimed the players he tore into during a now-banned interview on the club's own MUTV station will no doubt put on a brave face.

No-one will want to stand up to the skipper who has always been manager Sir Alex Ferguson's first lieutenant, on and off the pitch.

John O'Shea said yesterday criticism is part and parcel of playing for United. Is that what he really felt?

Ferguson's way of deflecting the Keane row was to refuse to talk about it and, instead, describe United as the greatest club on the planet.

That is what they would like to be. That is what they were a few years ago. They don't look like that now, however.

Fergie was on good form yesterday, far better than his side has shown this season.

But behind the public swagger, he will be thinking about Keane and what to do about him.

He has always supported his captain, through fair and foul play.

Often it has been claimed Ferguson encouraged Keane to have a go at players and supporters alike – perhaps even writing his script.

But this is different. If the manager backs Keane again then he is in danger of splitting the dressing room.

Indeed, it should have been the manager fiercely criticising the team after Saturday's shocking performance at Middlesbrough, not the captain.

I would love to be a fly on the wall inside the United dressing room tonight.

Will Fergie still ignore the Keane claims or will he use them to lift a group of players who must be shell-shocked after what has gone on since the weekend?

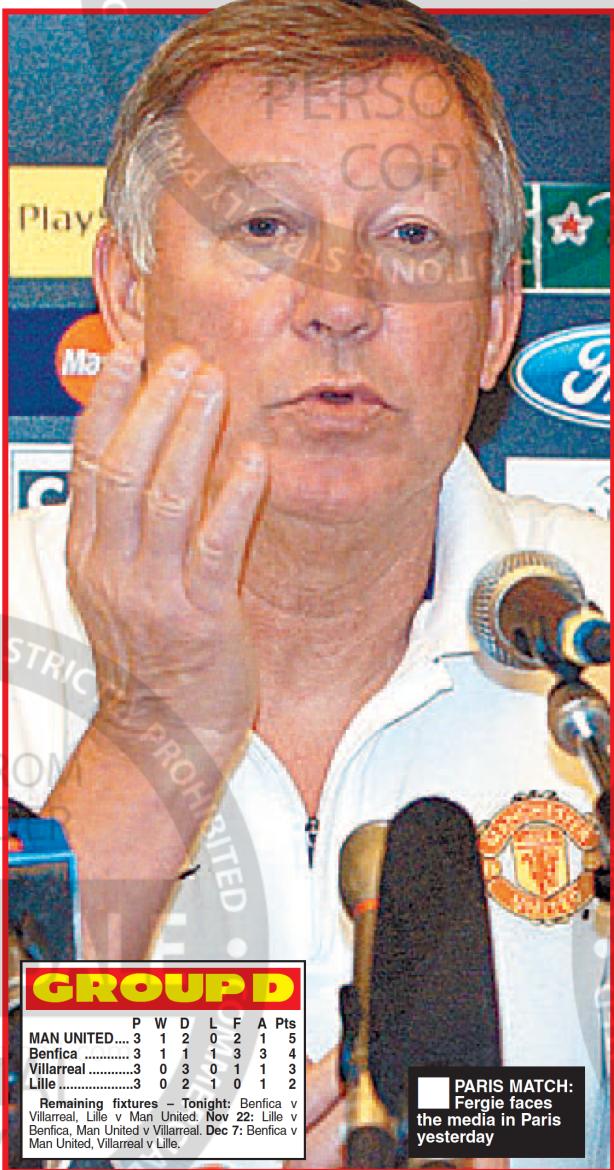
Passion

Surely he has to use the Keane rant to inspire his side ahead of a game United must win. The Champions League is all they have left.

They can give the perfect answer against Lille with a display of passion and pride that will help prove their captain is yesterday's man.

BRIAN WOOLNOUGH

FERGIE:



GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
MAN UNITED....	3	1	2	0	2	1	5
Benfica	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Villarreal	3	0	3	0	1	1	3
Lille	3	0	2	1	0	1	2

Remaining fixtures – Tonight: Benfica v Villarreal, Lille v Man United. Nov 22: Lille v Benfica, Man United v Villarreal. Dec 7: Benfica v Man United, Villarreal v Lille.

PARIS MATCH:
Fergie faces the media in Paris yesterday

SPORTWORD

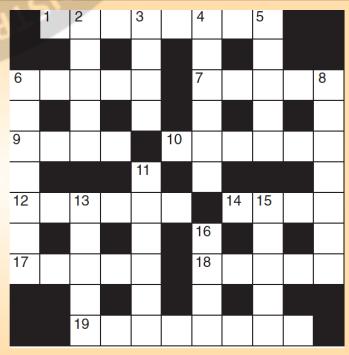
ACROSS

- Wolves and Scotland midfielder (8)
- Stephen, Tour de France winner in 1987 (5)
- See 13 down
- Beaumont, British Lions captain in 1980 (4)
- Bruce, former Nottinghamshire and England wicketkeeper (6)
- Manchester United and England striker (6)
- Khan, boxing silver medallist at the 2004 Olympics (4)
- Rovers, League of Ireland club (5)
- Coast, Kolo Toure's football country (5)
- Scottish Premier League club (8)

DOWN

- Henry, trainer whose first Derby winner was Slip Anchor (5)
- Stephen, golfer whose first US Tour victory was the Western Open in 2004 (4)
- Philippe, former Newcastle and England defender (6)
- Prost, Formula One world champion on four occasions (5)
- Kenny, father and son American motorcyclists (7)
- Snooker world champion in 1997 (7)
- Harry, men's 100 metres Commonwealth champion in 1966 (6)
- 13 and 7 across. Winner of the Oaks in 2004 (5,5)
- England's 1966 World Cup winning football captain (5)
- Dicky, famous cricket umpire (4)

CALL 0905 072 3266 FOR TODAY'S SOLUTION. Calls cost 75p per min from a BT landline. See Page 52 for yesterday's answers.



5 FOR FUN

1 Name the runner-up in the men's singles at Wimbledon in 1979, who is back in jail after violent incidents in Paris?

2 Which football club have expressed an interest in moving to London's 2012 Olympic Stadium, only to be told by other organisations said it was to be used mainly for athletics?

3 Which England striker, with 31 caps, ended his career with a brief spell at Burnley, in the 1992-93 season?

4 With which sport would you associate the Melbourne Cup?

5 In darts, which is the lowest number unattainable with one dart?

Answers: Page 52

pain, Sir Alex tells United fans

IT HURTS LIKE HELL



THE CHUCKLE BROTHERS:
Wayne Rooney and Sir Alex Ferguson put United's worries to one side last night as they train in Paris

SIR ALEX FERGUSON has admitted he is hurting as much as the fans over Manchester United's current crisis.

United face a vital few days, starting with tonight's crucial Champions League clash with Lille and then the visit of Premiership top dogs Chelsea on Sunday.

And Ferguson said: "There is no question that I know exactly how the fans feel. And I hope that they know exactly how we feel."

Faith

United crashed to their heaviest defeat in 19 months on Saturday, a 4-1 humiliation at Middlesbrough. It leaves them a massive 13 points adrift of unbeaten Chelsea, while they also look vulnerable in Europe. A team minus injured skipper Roy

■ from BILL THORNTON in Paris

Keane, Gary Neville, Gabriel Heinze and Quinton Fortune, plus the suspended Paul Scholes, must regain respect in the Stade de France.

Many of the players were slammed by Keane in an MUTV programme that was pulled on Monday and is unlikely ever to be aired.

Ferguson refused to discuss that but he hinted he had not taken the big stick to the players in whom he must continue to put his faith.

"We have such a lot of experienced players injured and that isn't easy for the young players to handle.

"But young players at this club learn well."

"There is nothing wrong with their ability or temperament. Playing in the Stade de France will

not affect them. What they have to pick up on is the resilience and the substance of United teams of the past.

"What happened on Saturday should help them to understand that better than anything."

"Losing a game 1-0 is one thing. When you get a 4-1 belting, I think it is a bit different."

Yet Ferguson insisted the bad publicity raining on him and the players' heads was "fantastic".

Captain

He claimed: "We know the challenges we face and it helps the young players understand what it means to be at this club. I hope it helps to make them men."

Ferguson hauled off £100,000-a-week centre-back Rio Ferdinand four minutes from time at The

Riverside on Saturday in a move that was widely seen by many observers as public humiliation for the under-performing England star.

But the United boss confirmed last night: "Rio will be playing against Lille."

And he revealed striker Ruud van Nistelrooy will captain the team for the first time.

TEAMS

LILLE: Sylvie, Lichsteiner, Schmitz, Tavlaridis, Tafforeau; Bodmer, Makoun; Gyax, Almovic, Dernis; Moussilou.
UNITED (probable): Van der Sar; O'Shea, Ferdinand, Brown, Silvestre; Ronaldo, Smith, Fletcher, Richardson; Rooney, Van Nistelrooy.
TV: Sky Sports 2, 6pm.

Still best

From Back Page

under-fire United manager said of his critics: "It used to bother me when I first came to the club."

"Now, it doesn't bother me one bit. There's no point in me getting my drawers in a twist about it."

"There is no difference to this 'crisis' than the others in the past 19 years."

Fergie, whose whole face Lille in Paris tonight in the Champions League, refused to be drawn on Keane's Monday rant on MUTV in a programme that was pulled. "I have nothing to say about that," said Fergie.

Keane is said to be furious with his views were axed.

What you think

RIO NOT GOOD ENOUGH 4 SUNDAY MORNING TEAM. GINGER SOTON.

time rlo an rest of man u money grabbers got their head out of their bank accounts an started playin. sir matt is in his grave! clive.

LEAVE FERGIE ALONE, HE IS MY HERO MAN UNITED ARE STILL DA BEST IN DA WORLD, WE HATE SCOUSERS!

mfc 4eva i thought fergie would be blamin the smog for there s*** effort on sat! suv.

Man Utd fans keep moaning Chelsea bought title. Thats the whole idea, buy good players, win the title. Mark Boro fan.

come home wayne all is 4given we can c its gone rong 4ya great spirit er not like utd. JJ EFC.

thanks fergie but its time to move aside ferdinand oshea fletcher richardson not good enough. dek mufc.

how does that song go again? was it glory glory man utd? ha, dont make me laugh 4-1? ha ha try stopping me! THE LAFFIN SCouser.

LILLE: Sylvie, Lichsteiner, Schmitz, Tavlaridis, Tafforeau; Bodmer, Makoun; Gyax, Almovic, Dernis; Moussilou.

UNITED (probable): Van der Sar; O'Shea, Ferdinand, Brown, Silvestre; Ronaldo, Smith, Fletcher, Richardson; Rooney, Van Nistelrooy.

TV: Sky Sports 2, 6pm.

CRYSTAL PALACE striker Andy Johnson's return from knee surgery means he will not be back until November 19.

DOCTORS have told Graham Coughlan that an Achilles injury he has picked up means he will not play for Sheffield Wednesday for six weeks.

STOKE defender Marion Broome has had another game added to a three-match ban due to what the Football

Forest's David Johnson to solve his striking problems.

STUART PEARCE has secured striker Bradley Wright-Phillips, 20, on a four-year deal at Manchester City.

COVENTRY have taken Celtic winger Anthony McParland on trial.

SOCcer SHOTS

Association deemed a "frivolous" appeal against his red card at Southampton.

BOSS Neil Warnock has assured unsettled midfielder Michael Tonge he still has a big future at Sheffield United.

HULL manager Peter Taylor has turned to Nottingham

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Information Station

UEFA Champions League Group E

	PSV (1)	AC Milan (0)	0	Sheff Utd	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Farhan 12	1	Alt: 35,500		Reading	17	11	5	28	9	38	
Schalke 04 (1)	2	Fenerbahce (0)	0	Wolverhampton	17	10	6	4	10	33	
Kuranyi 32				Luton	17	8	5	25	22	28	
Sand 90		Alt: 59,000		Leeds	16	7	5	4	19	26	
				Crystal Palace	15	7	3	24	15	24	
				Southampton	15	5	9	2	19	13	24
				SPURS	15	5	6	4	14	17	24
				Cardiff	16	6	5	5	25	19	23
				Wolves	17	5	7	5	21	18	22
				Burnley	17	6	4	7	23	21	22
				Preston	17	4	9	19	18	21	
				Everton	17	3	7	6	19	16	19
				Norwich	17	5	4	8	17	22	19
				Ipswich	16	5	4	7	19	23	19
				Stoke	16	6	1	9	15	24	19
				Hull	17	4	6	7	13	17	18
				Derby	16	5	6	5	14	17	17
				Brighton	17	2	10	5	17	22	16
				Coventry	16	3	7	6	20	26	16
				Sheff Wed	16	3	7	6	13	19	16
				Plymouth	16	3	7	6	12	19	16
				Crewe	17	3	6	5	19	20	16
				Millwall	17	2	6	9	12	27	12

Championship Table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olympiacos (1)	1	Lyon (2)	4				
Babangida 3	4	2	1	2	3	7	
Schalke 04	4	1	2	1	7	6	5
AC Milan	4	1	2	1	5	4	5
Fenerbahce	4	1	2	2	7	8	4
Rosenborg (0)	0	Real Madrid (2)	2				
		Guti 41					
		Alt: 20,122					

Coca-Cola League One

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lyon	4	3	0	1	0	12	
Real Madrid	4	3	0	1	8	6	12
Rosenborg	4	1	0	3	4	8	3
Olympiacos	4	0	0	4	11	3	

Group G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool (1)	3	Anderlecht (0)	0				
Morientes 34	4	1	0	6	1	10	
Luis Garcia 61							
Cisse 89							
Real Betis (1)	1	Chelsea (0)	0				
Dani 28							

Group H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Armenia Bratislava (1)	2	Rangers (2)	2				
Borbely 8	4	2	1	5	1	7	
Kozak 59							
Thompson 44							
Alt: 5,227							
Inter Milan (0)	2	FC Porto (1)	1				
Cruz 75, pen. 82							
Hugo Almeida 16							
Alt: 37							

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Inter Milan	4	3	0	1	4	3	9
Armenia Bratislava							5
Rangers	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
FC Porto	4	1	0	3	7	8	3

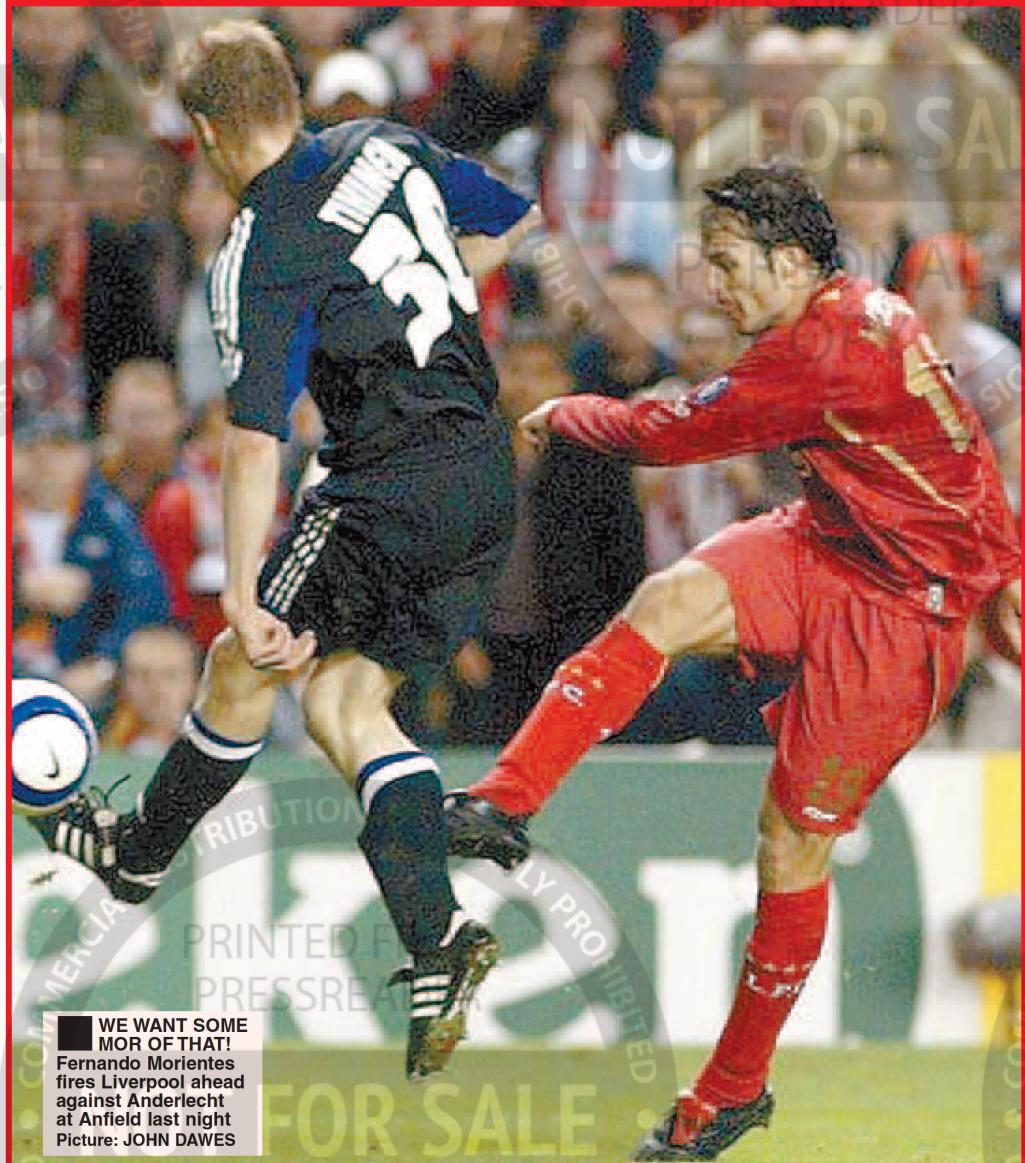
Coca-Cola Championship

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brighton (1)	1	Wolves (0)	1				
Fruzs 40							
Burnley (0)	2	Millwall (1)	1				
Dyer 76							
Elliott 80							
Crewe (1)	1	Leeds (0)	0				
Buford 8, og							
Norwich (0)	1	Cardiff (0)	0				
Alexander 77, og							
Alt: 23,638							
Plymouth (1)	1	Leicester (0)	0				
Oldswick 28							
Abandoned due to waterlogged pitch.							
President (0)	3	Hull (0)	0				
Johnson 59							
Jones 73							
Melkerson 76							
Alt: 13,536							
Reading (1)	2	Sheff Wed (0)	0				
Whalen 38, og							
Klosa 64							
Alt: 16,188							
Sheff Utd (1)	4	Luton (0)	0				
Jagalska 34, 38							
Morgan 50							
Perisic 71							
Alt: 22,554							
Watford (1)	3	QPR (0)	1				
Spring 38							
McNamee 70							
Young 76							
Alt: 16,476							

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
NATIONWIDE SOUTH: Dorchester	2	Luton	2				
UNIBOND PREMIER: AFC Telford 3							
Runcorn 1, Burscough 3 Ashton Utd 0.							
SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER:							
Banbury 4 Chippenham 2.							

SERIOUSLY football

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as Spanish ace comes good for Rafa 

MORE THE MERRIER

FERNANDO Morientes repaid his manager's faith in him by ensuring Anfield enjoyed another successful European night.

The Spanish hitman was given a vote of confidence before the game from boss Rafa Benitez.

And he quickly responded by grabbing the 61st European goal of his career to send Anderlecht crashing to another Champions League defeat.

Morientes has, so far, failed to deliver the goods in the Premiership, and his 34th-minute strike last night was only his third for Liverpool this season – all of them coming in Europe.

Domestic

But Benitez has consistently backed him, claiming that he will come good in the end. Maybe that touch of perseverance will now pay off in domestic competition.

The ex-Real Madrid man's strike will have done his confidence the power of good, after showing a touch of class and coolness.

Steven Gerrard chipped the ball to him on the right-hand side of the penalty area and he calmly chested it down before lashing in a right-foot shot that gave keeper Silvio Proto no chance.

Ironically, that goal came just a minute after Proto had blocked a shot off the knees of the high-jumping Morientes, during a period of early Liverpool pressure.

But Morientes had to leave the pitch after 52 minutes, clearly struggling with a leg problem.

Tiny

The Reds made their dominance count in the 61st minute, however, through a sensational 20-yard header from Luis Garcia.

The tiny Spaniard somehow rose high enough to connect with a Steve Finnan cross, but few people would have dreamt that he would score from such a range!

He was in what looked to be a hopeless situation, but the ball flew high and into the back of the net. The Belgium outfit's cause wasn't helped in the 75th minute



KOP HERO:
Luis Garcia punches the air after heading in the second goal



by KEVIN FRANCIS
Liverpool 3
Anderlecht 0

when Nenad Jestrović was red-carded for foul and abusive language, but the game had already been put out of their reach.

And Liverpool capped another impressive European display a minute from time when substitute Djibril Cissé raced clear and calmly slotted home goal number three.

It was a match in which captain Gerrard once again turned on the style, with the kind of classy display that has become his trademark as he popped up everywhere

in a free-roaming midfield role. Some of his crossfield passes were a joy to watch as the Liverpool ace gave a typically all-action, sleeves-rolled-up, performance.

Cracking

He almost set-up giant striker Peter Crouch for a goal after 22 minutes, following a cracking right-wing run that saw him evade all Anderlecht attention.

He then sent over a low cross which Crouch, sliding towards

the goal, made contact with but pushed wide of the post.

Anderlecht did give an early indication of the kind of threat they can pose when Christian Wilhelmsson nearly caught out Sami Hyypia.

However, it was soon business as usual for the reigning European Champions.

TEAMS

LIVERPOOL: Reina, Finnigan, Carragher, Hyypia, Riise, Gerrard, Alonso, Sissoko, Luis Garcia, Morientes, Crouch. Subs: Dudek, Kewell, Clisse, Hamann, Josemi, Warnock, Zenden. ANDERLECHT: Proto, Zewlakow, Juhasz, Tihinen, Wilhelmsson, Vanderhaeghe, Deman, Goor, Akhn, Zetterberg, Popenza. Subs: Zitka, Denev, Jestrović, Baseggio, Pujol, Hasi, Traore. Referee: K Molton Nielsen (Denmark).

Cam cracks it in late escape

Brighton 1 Wolves 1

THE spoils were shared at the Withdean last night with Colin Cameron forcing a late equaliser for injury-hit Wolves.

Brighton went in front five minutes before the interval when Frenchman Alexandre Frutus scored with a low shot to give fans hope of a first home win in two months.

But Wolves salvaged a point eight minutes from time when substitute Cameron fired home after loan Ganea saw a shot hit the bar.

Lions lose plot on Ell of a night

Burnley 2 Millwall 1

BURNLEY sealed victory in a bad-tempered match in which they had James O'Connor sent off and Millwall got three red cards.

Millwall's Jermaine Wright scored after a minute but his side lost Ben May after a half-time tunnel row with Frank Sinclair. Jody Morris and O'Connor were then dismissed, as Nathan Dyer and Wade Elliott made it 2-1 to the Clarets. Then Marvin Elliott saw red after the whistle.

Crewe 1 Leeds 0

GARY KELLY's own-goal jinx struck again to put a spanner in Leeds' bid to close in on the automatic promotion places.

The defender beat his own keeper Neil Sullivan twice last season and he was at it again to set up Crewe for only their third win in 16 league games this season.

The right-back tried to clear Michael Higgins' cross but sent his eighth-minute header looping over Sullivan and into the net.

It's Whelan of misfortune...

■ Reading 2 Sheffield Wednesday 0

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY skipper Glen Whelan suffered an identity crisis as Reading's promotion push continued to gather steam.

Whelan played for most of the night in a shirt without a number after it got ripped off in an early challenge.

But that didn't allow him to escape being credited with the own goal that helped send the second-placed Royals well clear of the chasing Championship pack.

His misjudged challenge wrongfooted his own keeper David Lucas after he had attempted to prevent Reading's top scorer Dave Kitson from steering in Kevin Doyle's pull-back seven minutes before half-time.

Kitson hit the second low into the corner of the net in the 64th minute after he had been put clear by a brilliant solo run and pass by Glen Little.

It was Kitson's eighth goal of the season and his fourth in four games.

■ Plymouth 1 Leicester 0 (abandoned at half-time)

POOR Nick Chadwick scored on his recall to Plymouth's starting line-up – but saw the goal wiped out by a torrential downpour!

The Home Park clash was abandoned at half-time by Northants ref Andy Woolmer, which means the Foxes face another 500-mile round-trip to Devon.

Striker Chadwick had struck in the 29th minute but in the end it proved meaningless.

■ Preston 3 Hull 0

JEMAL JOHNSON helped end a miserable run of nine home games without a win for Preston.

A long clearance on 59 minutes picked out Johnson – who is on loan from Blackburn – and he slipped the ball past defender Mark Joseph and fired home.

David Jones and Paul McKenna then sealed the points for Preston with superb long-range efforts.

■ Norwich 1 Cardiff 0

NORWICH finally got the break they craved last night as Cardiff goalkeeper Neil Alexander scored a freak own-goal to gift the Canaries victory.

Without a win in five matches, Norwich took advantage of Alexander's misfortune 14 minutes from time.

Jim Brennan broke forward and crossed for on-loan Calum Davenport, whose header struck a Cardiff defender, bounced off the back of Alexander's head and ended up in the visitors' goal.

Norwich had gone out knowing they needed a win to help save under-fire manager Nigel Worthington's job – but for long periods it looked like another hard-luck story until Alexander's unwitting intervention.

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2/1 Lille 11/5 Draw Man Utd 11/10

Champions League, tonight, Stade de France, kick-off 7.45pm, live on Sky

correct score **first goalscorer**

Lille	Score	Man Utd	4/1	R. Van Nistelrooy (M)
8/1	0-0	6/1	5/1	W. Rooney (M)
13/2	1-0	11/2	12/1	C. Ronaldo (M)
5/1	1-1	5/1	14/1	J.S. Park (M)
12/1	2-0	3/1	14/1	A. Smith (M)
10/1	2-1	3/1	33/1	M. Silvestre (M)
14/1	2-2	14/1	33/1	J. O'Shea (M)
40/1	3-0	18/1	40/1	R. Ferdinand (M)
28/1	3-1	16/1	50/1	Others available on request

Others available on request

Sad Hatters driven out by two Jags

PHIL JAGIELKA's double helped keep Neil Warnock's Sheffield United at the top of the Championship table.

The Blades bounced back in style from Saturday's goalless draw against Cardiff with four goals against promotion rivals Luton.

Shock challengers Luton, last season's League One winners, were firmly put to the sword.

Chris Morgan was also on the scoresheet for the Blades with his first of the season five minutes into the second half, while on-loan Portsmouth striker Vincent Pericard grabbed his second this term after 71 minutes.

Smashed

United's crucial breakthrough came after 34 minutes when midfielder Jagielka claimed his third goal of the season.

Alan Quinn's tricky free-kick had Luton keeper Marlon Beresford stretching to punch out as far as Paul Ifill, who smashed a volley into a crowd of players.

Chris Morgan's scuffed shot trickled to Jagielka, who stabbed in from six yards.

Luton hunted for a quick reply and Carlos Edwards

Sheff Utd 4 Luton 0

tore down the right and cut back a dangerous low cross that forced Jagielka into a desperate clearance.

And just before half-time Blades keeper Paddy Kenny turned away Warren Feeney's shot.

But five minutes into the second half, Morgan headed United into the comfort zone after Quinn swung in another testing free kick.

Then Derek Geary curled in a low ball which sub Pericard, sliding in, managed to guide past Hatters keeper Beresford.

Jagielka added his second, and United's fourth, two minutes from time.

IT'S SPRING TIME

Watford 3 QPR 1

MATTHEW SPRING ended Rangers' run of five unbeaten away games last night. He headed Watford ahead in the 39th minute from close range after Ashley Young's ball into the box ricocheted off Dan Shittu.

Spring then turned provider for the second goal, laying off a smart ball in the 70th minute for Anthony McNamee to fire under keeper Simon Royce.

Young's free-kick five minutes later evaded everyone for Watford's third, before Shittu's last-minute effort for a well-beaten Rangers.

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Lille/Lille	4/1	Draw	2-2	14/1
Lille/Draw	14/1	Man Utd	2-0	7/1
Draw/Draw	7/2	Man Utd	3-1	20/1
Man Utd/Man Utd	13/5	Lille	1-0	13/2

Others available on request.

SCORECAST

1st Scorer	Correct Score	Current Price
W. Rooney	Man Utd 2-1	35/1
R. Van Nistelrooy	Man Utd 3-0	66/1

Others available on request.

ARSENAL V SPARTA PRAGUE

1/4	Arsenal	9/2	Sparta Prague	9/1
Kick Off 19.45, Sky Sports Xtra				
HALF TIME / FULL TIME		CORRECT SCORE		
Arsenal/Arsenal	4/7	Arsenal	1-0	11/2
Draw/Arsenal	7/2	Arsenal	2-0	9/1
S. Prague/Arsenal	28/1	Draw	2-2	28/1
Arsenal/S. Prague	50/1	S. Prague	1-0	12/1

Others available on request.

SCORECAST

1st Scorer	Correct Score	Current Price
T. Henry	Arsenal 2-1	25/1
F. Ljungberg	Arsenal 2-1	45/1

Others available on request.

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**SERIOUSLY
football**

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Chelsea's



DANI JOY: Joaquin gives Dani a lift after (below) the substitute beat Chelsea keeper Petr Cech to fire Real Betis into a 28th-minute lead last night in Spain



proud record wrecked as Betis close the gap



Vassell fired up by Cole

■ by KEVIN FRANCIS

A SPOT of friendly rivalry is the main driving force behind the 10-goal partnership of Manchester City's striking partnership of Darius Vassell and Andy Cole.

The pair were in stunning form as City recorded their sixth win in 11 Premiership games with the 3-1 defeat of Aston Villa, which hoisted them into fourth place in the table on Monday.

And it was particularly sweet for Vassell against the club he left to join Stuart Pearce's City outfit for £2m in the summer.

He grabbed two goals with Cole getting the other and said of their blossoming partnership: "Andy is single-minded."

"While he hasn't said anything, I know deep down he will want to score more goals than me."

Dip

"I'm the same and he knows that. There is a little battle going on between us but that can only be beneficial to the club."

The two have five goals each but Vassell has seen the partnership broken up five times when injuries have forced Cole to watch from the sidelines.

And that has been a problem for City, with Vassell saying: "Whenever Andy is out of the team, we seem to go through a little dip. We are a better team with Andy in it."

"His experience and goals record speaks for itself and I need to be playing alongside someone like him."

"I'm still trying to learn. I don't mind doing his running as long as I get a goal at the end of it!"

JOSE'S DAN 'N BUSTED

CHELSEA suffered a Real blip here last night as Dani's first-half strike sent them to their first 90-minute defeat of the season.

The Real Betis striker came off the bench to slot in the 28th-minute goal which ended a run of 16 matches unbeaten dating back to the Community Shield win over Arsenal in August.

In fact, it was their first defeat for six months — since the Champions League semi-final defeat by Liverpool at Anfield in May — although a week ago they lost a Carling Cup penalty shootout to Charlton.

More important last night, while Liverpool were going top of Group G by beating Anderlecht 3-0 at home, Betis moved within a point of second-placed Chelsea.

The defeat dashed Chelsea's hopes of qualifying for the Champions League knockout last 16 — a win in Seville would have secured their place.

Posts

But they have another chance in three weeks when they go to Anderlecht and Betis visit Anfield.

It would have been even worse for Chelsea if Dani had cashed in on another chance on the stroke of half-time after Edu had fired in a swerving effort which Petr Cech could only parry.

Chelsea must have thought they had earned a draw in the 71st minute when a superb Frank Lampard pass from one side of the area to the other found Shaun Wright-Phillips, who pulled the ball back to Michael Essien.

But Essien not only hit one post but both of them before the ball squirted back to keeper Pedro Contreras.

He was out of luck again in the 78th minute when he fired into the net for what he thought was the equaliser as well as his first strike for the Blues. But the goal was ruled out for an infringement.

Just before Essien had spelled double trouble, Contreras and Didier Drogba were involved in a pushing and shoving spat which earned the Chelsea substitute a booking.

The Spaniards came into the



GROUP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
LIVERPOOL.....	4	3	1	0	6	1	10
CHELSEA.....	4	2	1	1	5	1	7
Real Betis	4	2	0	2	3	6	6
Anderlecht	4	0	0	4	0	6	0

Remaining fixtures November 23:
Anderlecht v Chelsea, Liverpool v Real Betis.
December 6: Chelsea v Liverpool, Real Betis v Anderlecht.

by SCOTT COLEMAN
Real Betis 1
Chelsea 0

game at a low ebb. Not that their magnificent fans massed inside the Manuel Ruiz de Lopera Stadium showed it.

Since crashing 4-0 at the Bridge, they have lost three straight games in La Liga to sit fourth from bottom in the table.

Yet as they had done two weeks previously, they began with the bit between their teeth.

With the ball at his feet, Joaquin — a player tracked by Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho last season — is a real threat. And he

was instrumental in the early move which saw Edu get in behind Paulo Ferreira but the defender recovered.

Ferreira was back in the side for Asier Del Horro, the versatile William Gallas switched to left-back.

Drilled

Arjen Robben was preferred to the fit-again Damien Duff while Eidur Gudjohnsen was given a surprise start up front.

It was a tight opening, Mourinho's men sticking rigidly to their shape and looking to spring forward.

John Terry gave Robben the chance to run at Juanito with a superb ball out of defence but the Betis skipper stood firm and made a fine tackle. Neither side

backed down from the physical battle.

And Betis were dealt two cruel blows in as many minutes midway through the first half.

First Nano pulled up and had to go off then Ricardo Oliveira was halted by a firm but fair challenge from Ricardo Carvalho. The medical cart was forced to whizz on again.

Yet Oliveira's replacement, Dani, would make an immediate impact. Betis threatened when cutting in from wide areas and it was from one such surge that they went ahead.

Capi moved in from the left and drilled over a low centre. Then in a moment of magic Edu froze the Blues defence with a dummy and Dani was in to finish from close range.

Just before the goal, Cole had talked his way into the referee's notebook.

Now Chelsea needed more positive action to run at Juanito with a superb ball out of defence but the Betis skipper stood firm and made a fine tackle. Neither side

had a reverse pass — the flag correct-

ly stayed down — and only a smart block from Contreras thwarted him.

The keeper saved again from Robben before Gudjohnsen blew a golden chance. Put clean through by Terry, he blazed high over the bar.

But it could have been worse for Chelsea at half-time. Cech could only block Edu's swerving shot and Dani swooped on the rebound. To Chelsea's relief, his left-footed effort squirmed wide.

Nose

Chelsea were clearly intent on rescuing the game when Mourinho opted to replace Cole with Wright-Phillips and Gudjohnsen with Drogba at half-time.

In the 49th minute Robben was booked for a foul on Fernando Varela who was also cautioned by referee Alain Hamer for his part in the clash.

Robben had blood streaming from a cut on his nose and he treatment and changed his shirt before returning to the action.

Robbo's battling the drop

BRYAN ROBSON was last night forced to admit that West Brom face another winter-long battle against relegation.

Defeat against Newcastle last Sunday has left Albion hovering above the relegation zone, with just two Premiership wins all season.

And just months after consolidating the club's Premiership status, the former England skipper has handed his fans a harsh dose of reality.

Realistic

"We are in a relegation fight," said Robson. "It's going to be the same as last season."

"So everyone might as well get themselves used to that because that's how it's going to be. However, our supporters are realistic."

"We've got good honest lads here but I want them to do better and be in mid-table or in the top half of the league."

"I am not getting that from them at the moment and, for me, that is disappointing."

TEAMS

REAL BETIS: Contreras, Varela, Juanito, Nano, Melli, Joaquin, Rivera, Arzu, Edu, Capi, Oliveira. Subs: Doblas, Dani, Fernando, Xisco, Castellini, Juanlu, Israel.

CHELSEA: Cech, Paulo Ferreira, Ricardo Carvalho, Terry, Gallas, Essien, Makelele, Lampard, J Cole, Gudjohnsen, Robben. Subs: Cicicini, Duff, Geremi, Drogba, Bridge, Wright-Phillips, Huth.

REFEREE: A Hamer (Luxembourg).

Fergie: We're still top club in universe

■ from BILL THORNTON in Paris

DEFIANT Sir Alex Ferguson declared last night that Manchester United is the biggest club of all time.

Ferguson hit back at his critics when he claimed: "We are the biggest club ever. On the planet. In the universe. There is no doubt about that."

His claims came in the wake of the Roy Keane controversy after the injured United skipper panned his team-mates.

Chelsea, who are running away with the Premiership title, and European giants like Real Madrid, AC Milan and Barcelona would undoubtedly disagree with Fergie.

Feisty

But, after three days in which United crashed to a humiliating 4-1 defeat at Middlesbrough and were then panned by Keane, boss Ferguson was in feisty mood. The

Turn to Page 51

Weng: Jose's just stupid

■ by DANNY FULLBROOK since the Ashley Cole tapping-up affair earlier in the year.

But Wenger feels that, while he has been talking about football, Mourinho has over-stepped the mark by getting personal.

The Gunners chief said: "I find the comments out of order, disconnected with reality and disrespectful – and I will see if I will take some action."

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**LIVERPOOL 3
ANDERLECHT 0**
SEE PAGES 52-53

DAILY STAR
SERIOUSLY football

**REAL BETIS 1
CHELSEA 0**
SEE PAGES 54-55



HOT RED:
Roy Keane under siege from photographers yesterday



TARGET MEN: Fernando Morientes celebrates after firing Liverpool ahead and Dani salutes Real Betis fans after scoring against Chelsea

REAL PAIN FOR MOUR

But Liverpool race clear with Kop blitz

CHELSEA crashed to a shock defeat in Spain last night.

Jose Mourinho's side lost their first match since they were beaten at Anfield in the semi-final of last season's Champions League at Anfield.

Dani scored the Real Betis winner before the break in Seville as the Premiership outfit lost another cup tie after last week's Carling Cup KO by Charlton. Michael Essien was desperate

■ by KEVIN FRANCIS

ly unlucky not to equalise when his shot hit BOTH posts before rolling to safety.

Liverpool had no such worries in the other Group G clash after Fernando Morientes hammered home only his third of the season in the 34th minute.

Luis Garcia and Djibril Cisse added further goals in the second half after Anderlecht had Nenad Jestrović sent off for swearing.

BEST MATE TRAGEDY: See Page 47

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